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The Wash

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Oswald Note

By Norman Kempster
Washington Star Staff Writer

The FBI told Congress today that the Justice Department has decided it would be impossible to prosecute anyone in connection with the destruction of a threatening letter which Lee Harvey Oswald delivered to the Dallas FBI headquarters shortly before the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

James B. Adams, deputy associate FBI director, told a House Judiciary subcommittee that the statute of limitations apparently bars prosecution. He added, however, that FBI Director Clarence Kelley is still considering possible administrative action against those responsible for destroying the letter — two hours after Oswald himself was killed — and withholding information about it from the Warren Commission.

Adams said the FBI has completed an internal investigation "which leaves no doubt" that Oswald, the

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acccused assassin of Kennedy, visited the Dallas FBI office a few days prior to the assassination and left a handwritten note addressed to agent James B. Hosty.

ADAMS SAID Hosty has admitted destroying the letter on orders from a superior two hours after Oswald was murdered. But Adams said the investigation has not determined beyond doubt who ordered the destruction or the reason for it.

Adams also said that some employes of the Dallas FBI office were disciplined shortly after Kennedy was killed on Nov. 22, 1963 for unprofessional handling of the Oswald case prior to the assassination.

Adams said the discipline was not a result of misconduct but simply was for sloppy handling of information concerning Oswald, who was well known to the FBI as a defector to the Soviet Union.

See FBI, A-6

FBI

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The matter of the note to the Dallas bureau was revealed earlier this year. Adams said a receptionist who saw the note called it threatening although Hosty denied that it was.

ADAMS TESTIFIED that the FBI has no evidence to indicate that former director J. Edgar Hoover or other officials in the Washington headquarters of the FBI knew of the note.

However, Adams added that one former FBI assistant director, whom he did not identify, had said "he thought it was common knowledge at FBI headquarters that a threatening message had been received from Oswald."

Adams said the former assistant director said the special agent in charge of the Dallas bureau "mentioned on one occasion that he had an internal problem involving one of his agents who had received a threatening message from Oswald."

Adams said Hosty admitted earlier this year that he destroyed the letter and a memo which he wrote subsequently to explain it. Adams said Hosty claimed he was ordered to do so by his immediate superior although that superior denied having given such an order.

Hosty told investigators "his motive was he felt it would be embarrassing to the bureau and embarrassing to him personally" if the note came to light, Adams said. Adams added that he could provide no further explanation.

ADAMS ALSO repeated the FBI's denial that either Oswald or Jack Ruby, the man who murdered Oswald, were ever paid FBI informants.

Subcommittee chairman Don Edwards, D-Calif., said it was "curious" that a letter from Hoover to Warren Commission chief counsel J. Lee Rankin, which reported that the FBI had contacted Ruby nine times in 1959 in an effort to enlist him as an informant, had not been included in the Warren Commission's public report.

"Can you think of any reason why this letter should have been suppressd for all these years?" Edwards asked Adams.

"I don't have any idea," Adams responded. But he said that Hoover had claimed that although Ruby offered to provide information, he never did so.

"It is this kind of disclo sure that adds to the para noia in this country,' Edwards remarked.